CALL TO ORDER

The Meeting was called to order at 5:20 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Public Safety Advisory Committee Members present: Aaron Young, Malcolm Russell, Leo Wainhouse, Kalina Miller, Alan Hart, Richard Bieber, and Ray Dotson

Public Safety Advisory Board Members absent: Sam Ross

Councilmember(s) present: Mayor Douglas Richardson

Fire Department Staff Present: Deputy Chief Mitch Sagers and Assistant Chief Karl Roth

Staff Present: Chief Bret Farrar and Committee Staff Support Joanna Nichols, Administrative Assistant.

Guest Speaker: Dave Lovrak, LESA Community and Media Relations

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes from February meeting were discussed, corrections made again. Rick Bieber motioned to approve both February and March meeting minutes, with correction to February’s minutes. Alan Hart 2nd the motion. All ayes; minutes were approved.
PUBLIC COMMENT

No Public Comments.

REPORTS FROM BOARD MEMBERS AND STAFF

Malcolm Russell motioned to rearrange the order of the agenda by moving Reports from Board Members and Staff to the top of the agenda as staff member Assistant City Attorney Anita Booker-Hay needed to leave early. All ayes; agenda rearranged.

Assistant City Attorney Anita Booker-Hay stated that the Aggressive Begging Ordinance was being presented to City Council on Monday, April 11th. The changes made were a few amendments which had been suggested based on public safety concerns. Malcolm Russell stated that some questions had been raised concerning these amendments violating freedom of speech rights. Assistant City Attorney Booker-Hay stated that the amendments did not infringe on their freedom of speech rights, it was simply intended to increase public safety by placing guidelines on where people could do the begging/panhandling. Assistant City Attorney Booker-Hay added that our ordinance is loosely based on the City of Tacoma’s and it is working well for them. Assistant City Attorney Booker-Hay reiterated that the changes were not about telling people they couldn’t be there, i.e. near the teller machines at a bank, but instead addressing what they are doing while they’re there and this was strictly from a public safety perspective.

Malcolm Russell asked about the legality of PSAC having a Facebook page and/or using social media in general for PSAC purposes, as it pertained to the Open Public Meetings Act. Assistant City Attorney Anita Booker-Hay explained how easily and quickly Facebook posts can violate the Open Public Meetings Act, stating that the Legal Department would simply advise them to NOT have a Facebook or Twitter account for PSAC purposes. Discussion ensued regarding Open Public Meetings Act and how it applies to emails and the need to always ensure you are not conducting Committee business, not announced to and open to the public, in any other forum outside of the monthly public meetings.

GUEST SPEAKER

Handouts-911 Fact Sheets and Magnets
Dave Lovrak from LESA gave a presentation on 911 communications and the purpose of 911 versus the non-emergency number. Mr. Lovrak stated that if immediate response to a situation could change the outcome of that situation, then 911 is the appropriate number to call. If the situation is “cold,” meaning a speedy response would not change anything, the non-emergency number is the number to call. Mr. Lovrak added that if you are in doubt, then call 911.

Malcolm Russell gave the example of a man drinking outside a 7-11 store. Dave Lovrak stated that a crime in progress that does not involve immediate harm or damage to person or property can be called in to the non-emergency line if that number is handy; if it isn’t then it is completely okay to call 911. They will direct the call traffic accordingly. Mr. Lovrak added that the dispatch service for both numbers goes to the same place and is answered by the same people-LESA Dispatch- and that they are open 24/7. The only real difference is that with the
non-emergency you can hang up and call back, since they have no caller ID on the non-emergency line. Alan Hart asked about cell phones. Mr. Lovrak handed out samples of a 911 and non-emergency call computer screen and went over each line. Mr. Lovrak stated that they are completely dependent on the caller for information when a cell phone is used, just as with the non-emergency line. Ray Dotson asked about internet based home phones; Mr. Lovrak stated that the only problem they have with these systems is that they are customer reliant in regards to updating home information. For all these reasons every 911 operator will attempt to verify the information that is coming up on their screen, even though people get frustrated with them and state “you know where I am, just send someone.” It’s always better to be safe and verify rather than risk sending help to the wrong place.

Ray Dotson asked about PSAC members possibly taking a tour of the 911 facility. Dave Lovrak agreed that this was absolutely possible and he would be more than willing to set something up, adding that they have conference rooms available as well, so if we wanted to do it as part of a meeting we could look into that as well.

Malcolm Russell asked what number the Citizen Patrol, when active in Lakewood, had been calling. Dave Lovrak reiterated that it was dependent on what they were calling to report. If an immediate response is needed, they called 911; if immediate assistance was not going to change the outcome of the call, then the non-emergency was the correct number to call. Once again, Mr. Lovrak repeated that the lines are both answered in the same building by the same people, they are just prioritized differently.

Alan Hart asked about text messaging and Dave Lovrak stated that this is the next avenue which is being looked at. Alan asked if it might be up in the next 1-2 years and Mr. Lovrak agreed that this was very possible. Discussion ensued over Smartphone apps and police scanner availability.

Mayor Douglas Richardson asked Dave Lovrak to explain the relationship between LESA and Fire Communications/Fire Department. Mr. Lovrak explained that LESA is a PSAP-Primary Service Answering Point. This means that when you call 911, LESA answers. If you need the Fire Department and/or medical aid, they will put the call through to Fire Communications. Explanation of procedure ensued.

CITY COUNCIL LIAISON COMMENTS

Mayor Douglas Richardson stated that they were working on budget adjustments for the 2011/2012 budget mostly dealing with grants received in the Public Works Department.

Mayor Richardson stated that Chief Bret Farrar had been the only chief from the West Coast invited by US Attorney General Eric Holder to attend a meeting in Washington, D.C. to discuss police officer safety and what can be done to improve the current situation. Mayor Richardson stated that the Chief will probably have more to add to that when it came to his turn.

Mayor Douglas Richardson discussed the invitation (included in the PSAC packet) to the growth impact of the Joint Base Lewis-McChord meeting on April 20th at 6:30 p.m. at City Hall Council Chambers. Leo Wainhouse asked if the meeting would address the traffic concerns, and if this was the place to ask questions about their plans to address said concerns.
Mayor Richardson stated they would be summarizing the grant they just went through to determine what the issues were. It was a 5-6 prong study and there are recommendations out there regarding the transportation issue, the problem is no one wants to pay for it. Ray Dotson stated the flyers are calling it an “informational meeting.”

Mayor Douglas Richardson stated that on Saturday April 16th Lakewood would be celebrating Parks Appreciation Day. There will be events scheduled at several of the parks in Lakewood, and the website will have a complete list. Assistant Fire Chief Karl Roth stated that the events would be scheduled from 9 a.m.-12 p.m.

FIRE CHIEF COMMENTS

Deputy Fire Chief Mitch Sagers introduced himself as the new PSAC liaison, adding that Assistant Fire Chief Karl Roth would still be around as well. Deputy Chief Sagers stated that he also serves on the University Place Public Safety Commission and so their goal in having him attend rather than Chief Sharp was simply for continuity between the two cities.

Deputy Fire Chief Mitch Sagers stated that the transition to the name “West Pierce Fire and Rescue” was well under way; they still have a few more decals and uniforms to change over but most of it has been completed, and their commitment to emergency preparedness, public safety, and disaster management in both cities remains as strong as ever.

Deputy Fire Chief Mitch Sagers stated that PSAC board member Alan Hart has been nominated for the 2011 Governor’s Volunteer Service Award in Washington State for his dedicated service and volunteer work with the fire department’s C.E.R.T. program as well as his many other volunteer efforts within the City and Police Department.

Assistant Fire Chief Karl Roth stated that the 5th Annual National Disaster Preparedness Day will be on April 30th at Lowes from 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. This is in partnership with Lakewood Police Department and they are hoping for a great turnout.

POLICE CHIEF COMMENTS

Handout-Crime and Incident Report (February 2011)
Handout-CSRT Weekly Reports
Chief Bret Farrar stated that he had attended a joint meeting with the Fire Department to discuss their goals of working cooperatively together regarding emergency management. The Fire Department found a grant which they thought LPD might be successful in; we applied and are hoping that we are successful in our application process. The grant is a joint venture between the LPD and the Fire Department; we won’t know the amount awarded, if it is awarded, for several more weeks. Chief Farrar stated that he wants to build a great working relationship between the Fire Department and the Police Department and this is a good way to help make that happen.

Chief Bret Farrar stated that LPD is also working with the County regarding a potential tax increase to cover new radios for both departments so that we have the ability to communicate inter-agency as well.
Chief Bret Farrar stated that he went to Washington, D.C. to meet with the U.S. Attorney General. There were several Chiefs of Police from various large departments on the East Coast, as well as Presidents of organizations such as the IACP and NSA. The reason for the meeting was to discuss Officer Safety and the Attorney General wanted to hear from them what they thought could be done to put a stop to the recent rise in police officer killings and what they need for their departments. Chief Farrar stated that he didn’t need more people, so much as he needed more money for more training for the people he already had. Discussion ensued over the legal process and the ramifications of its current limitations.

Rick Bieber asked if there had been any discussion regarding gun control and violent crime. Chief Bret Farrar stated there was some discussion regarding gun control, but the fact is that the bad guys are going to get them, period. Chief Farrar added that one of the interesting issues brought up by the East Coast Chiefs were labor issues. For example bullet proof vests were not mandatory on the East Coast due to possible disciplinary actions and long-term repercussions (if an officer is killed in the line of duty) if someone forgets to wear their vest one day; they’re concerned the insurance companies will use this as an excuse to refuse to pay out for benefits, etc..

Aaron Young asked about the mental health issue/angle in reference to law enforcement. Chief Bret Farrar stated he brought that up as well, considering we have the largest mental health hospital in the state. Kalina Miller asked if the issue of offenders from different states being sent here would be addressed. Chief Farrar stated that they are working on improving the notification system when high-risk offenders are transferred to another state, but since Washington State implements this process, as well, we have to be very careful with that issue.

Chief Bret Farrar stated that we had a homicide at Wards Lake Park last week. Chief Farrar related how the murder suspect was actually found two days later thanks to excellent police work. Chief Farrar stated they are currently looking for a suspect in relation to another murder over by the StarLite swap meet; they have one in custody right now.

Chief Bret Farrar stated that the bodies of the three missing Hispanics had recently turned up; the police have had the weapon and the shooter and were just waiting for the bodies to show up so they could actually prosecute the case. Alan Hart asked if we knew the reason for the murders. Chief Farrar stated it was in relation to a drug deal.

Chief Bret Farrar stated that he would be very interested in PSAC helping him to look into the amount of Lakewood property tax money that goes to Pierce County and the fact that none of that money is re-allocated to the City of Lakewood. At the same time, the County requires the Police Department to pay every time we want to fingerprint someone, or incarcerate someone, or any of the other inter-agency needs we may have. Chief Farrar stated that he is not asking to get the millions of dollars back, but rather shouldn’t the City of Lakewood be able to say “take that money and reallocate it to the Prosecutor’s Office” for example. Mayor Douglas Richardson sated that when the City incorporated, we didn’t stop paying any taxes to Pierce County, except for road taxes.

Rick Bieber asked if the other cities pay the same amount. Chief Bret Farrar stated they did. Rick Bieber asked if asking for reallocation of money would then cause prices to increase. Chief Farrar agreed they would try that but the prices they are currently charging are “what it
costs” and that number would not change as a result of said reallocation. Discussion ensued. Leo Wainhouse asked if this was something PSAC could look into. Chief Farrar said that was his question as well. Alan Hart asked if PSAC could invite someone from Pierce County Finance Department to come and explain how the money is getting shuffled around. Chief Farrar agreed, stating that, at a minimum, considering how much money the citizens of Lakewood put into Pierce County, it is not unreasonable to expect some cooperation in terms of basic services such as fingerprinting, etc. Mayor Douglas Richardson stated this would have to be a political discussion at some point as well.

Chief Bret Farrar discussed the crime statistics, saying most of the numbers were continuing to go down. Alan Hart asked about the three murdered Hispanics who had recently been found. Chief Farrar stated that they had been killed somewhere else, not Lakewood, and therefore did not figure into the homicide numbers for Lakewood. Chief Farrar added that he is still fighting with WASPC in regards to how the military affects our crime numbers but the unwillingness to include this data in their numbers seems to be continuing into 2011.

Ray Dotson asked if there was a process to cure the skewed statistics. Chief Bret Farrar stated he is trying, but he can’t get anyone at WASPC to listen to him. Alan Hart asked if it might be a good idea to try to invite someone from WASPC to explain their number counting to us. Chief Farrar stated he would love to try that.

Kalina Miller stated that she had read an article in the TNT (The News Tribune) regarding gang convictions and asked if that was helping Lakewood. Chief Bret Farrar stated that what was helping Lakewood was how hard Investigators Conlon and Martin worked the gang unit and all the hours they put into it. Chief Farrar gave an example of a recent homicide, with nothing to go on, which was solved because of their determination and persistence.

Malcolm Russell asked Chief Bret Farrar about an item on the CSRT report regarding something called “Spice.” Chief Bret Farrar stated it was an herb being sold at the local mini-marts; it’s supposed to be mock marijuana. Discussion ensued.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Aaron Young stated that we would roll the 2011 work plan in with the CABC Session with City Council listed under New Business.

NEW BUSINESS

Aaron Young asked Joanna Nichols to explain about the CABC Session with City Council. Joanna Nichols stated that the meeting was scheduled for April 25th here at the Lakewood Police Department at 7:00 p.m. In their packets tonight was last year’s work plan and a rough draft of the 2011 work plan, which she needed assistance with fleshing out in order to turn in to the City Clerk for inclusion in the agenda packet for that evening. Rick Bieber added that the more members present at the CABC Session the easier it goes. Discussion ensued.

Aaron Young asked the Mayor about his suggestion of combining PSAC with another committee for a meeting. Mayor Douglas Richardson stated that they will probably talk about
that on the 25th, as well, but that it seemed to make sense to combine committees in regards to certain issues; Mayor Richardson used the Transportation committee and the railroad safety issue as an example. Discussion ensued.

Aaron Young asked if PSAC was interested in looking into Fireworks. Discussion ensued; it was decided not to put this on the agenda. Rick Bieber stated that he feels we should keep the railroad safety issue on the agenda. Discussion ensued; it was decided this definitely needed to be kept on the agenda.

Alan Hart mentioned the citizen survey regarding in-car cameras which Lieutenant Steve Mauer had brought to the committee. Discussion ensued. Rick Bieber stated that we need more information from Lieutenant Mauer before we can move forward on this one. This was agreed on.

Rick Bieber suggested having a PSAC webpage on the City side. Discussion ensued. Joanna Nichols stated that the websites were currently under discussion and construction on both sides, so we wouldn’t be able to move too far forward on this until these issues were decided on. Ray Dotson suggested adding the Pierce County property tax issue to the agenda, so we can look at pursuing that issue as well as the WASPC crime statistic issue.

Joanna Nichols asked if they had any significant accomplishments they wanted to add to the work plan. Aaron Young stated we can add the Aggressive Begging Ordinance; Rick Bieber added the in-car cameras.

Ray Dotson stated that Deputy Fire Chief Mitch Sagers had asked if we had something similar to Code Red (a University Place program) which notified people of issues, such as national disasters, etc. Chief Bret Farrar stated we did, through DEM; it was the Pierce County Alert. Discussion ensued about Code Red. Rick Bieber suggested tapping into other groups, in other cities such as University Place, to see what ideas they had as well. Mayor Douglas Richardson stated we definitely have an excellent resource in Deputy Chief Sagers in that respect. Discussion ensued.

Rick Bieber announced that he had turned in his resignation letter from PSAC today, effective tomorrow.

ADJOURNMENT

Leo Wainhouse motioned to adjourn the meeting. Kalina Miller 2nd the motion. Meeting Adjourned at 7:14 p.m.

Public Safety Advisory Committee  
Attest:

_____________________________  
Aaron Young, Chair

_____________________________  
Joanna Nichols / Secretary